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Narodno Zadrugarstvo.

COOPERATIVE ORGANIZATIONS IN YUGOSLAVIA
FROM 1947 TO 1950

Mihail Vuckovic

Yugoslavia has over 18,000 cooperative organizations with over 4 million members. The majority of these organizations is composed of agricultural cooperatives of the general type. The number of agricultural cooperatives has increased from 5,041 at the end of 1945 to 9,060 at the end of 1949, an increase of 179 percent. The number of members has increased from 500,000 to 3,250,000 in the same period, an increase of 660 percent. Practically every rural household is represented in an agricultural cooperative. Yugoslavia does not have a single village which does not have an agricultural cooperative of the general type.

Agricultural cooperatives have promoted agriculture and increased agricultural production through various organizational units, such as cooperative economies [i.e. farms] and livestock farms, cooperative machine, breeding, and seed stations, cooperative vineyards, orchards, nurseries, truck farms, and apiaries.

Land areas held by cooperatives vary from small lots, consisting of only a few hectares, to hundreds or thousands of jutro. However, the average land area is relatively small. In Croatia, the average area held is about 95 hectares, in Serbia about 100 hectares. Only a very small percentage of Yugoslav cooperatives are cooperatives in name only and not in activity.

General agricultural cooperatives in Croatia have 64 tractors, almost 800 animal-drawn plows, and hundreds of sowing machines, seed separators, and threshing machines; in Serbia, they have 9,500 plows, over 100 sowing machines, and hundreds of reapers and mowers. Since 1939, general agricultural cooperatives have increased their livestock reserve 184 percent for horses and cattle and 190 percent for sheep and goats.

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A large number of general agricultural cooperatives have developed savings and loan activities by collecting savings for deposit and mobilizing money reserves, which had not been utilized or were improperly utilized. A considerable number of cooperatives have organized savings and loan branches of their own.

Cooperatives are managed by small and middle farmers who possess up to 10 hectares of land. The percentage of members of administrative councils of agricultural cooperatives who had up to 10 hectares of land was 81.7 in Slovenia, 87.9 in Serbia, 92.3 in Macedonia, 92.9 in Bosnia and Herzegovina, 94.3 in Croatia, and 99.4 in Montenegro.

The SRZ (farm work cooperative), the highest form of cooperative, developed in two stages. In the first stage, the number of SRZ increased from 31 in 1945 to 1,381 at the end of 1948. In the second stage, after the development of work cooperatives and the admission of working farmers into them, the SRZ increased to 6,616 by the end of 1949, and included 329,603 households and 1,812,068 hectares of land. In a year, the number of cooperatives had increased 486 percent, the number of households 547 percent, and the land area 559 percent.

Today, Yugoslavia has 7,012 SRZ with 377,163 households, indicating that 16 percent of the households in Yugoslavia are members of work cooperatives. Cooperatives have 1,978,125 hectares of land; or 19.6 percent of all the land in Yugoslavia is included in work cooperatives. If the land areas of agricultural cooperatives of the general type and of the state sector are added, over 26 percent of the land in Yugoslavia is included in the socialist sector.

Marked differences exist between the republics. Although 42.6 percent of the total number of households in Macedonia belong to cooperatives, only 18.3 percent in Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina are included. Cooperatives in Macedonia include 50 percent of the total cultivated area, and 77.4 percent in Montenegro.

In the mid-1949, the third and fourth types of cooperatives represented 65 percent of all types; the first type, 8.4 percent; the second type 26.3 percent; and the third type 53 percent.

The average yield per hectare is greater on cooperative holdings than on holdings of private individuals. For instance, the average yield of wheat in Yugoslavia in 1949 was 13.6 metric centners per hectare, and 14.42 metric centners per hectare on cooperative holdings; the corn yield was 17.5 metric centners per hectare on individual holdings, and 23 on cooperative holdings; the potato yield was 73 metric centners on individual holdings, and 117 on cooperative; and the sugar beet yield was 167 metric centners on individual holdings, and 334 on cooperative holdings. Over 50 percent of the agricultural products in the Vojvodina now come from cooperatives.

The average yield per hectare for industrial crops on cooperative holdings was even greater. The SRZ in Macedonia produced over 60 percent of all the cotton produced in Yugoslavia in 1949. A yield of 30 metric centners of tobacco and other industrial crops per hectare is not uncommon on cooperative holdings today. The "Ivan Bogdanovic" SRZ in Zabrezje had a yield of 33 metric centners of corn per hectare on an area of 60 hectares; and the "Milutin Erakovic" Work Cooperative in Piroman had a yield of 36 metric centners of corn on an area of 30 hectares.

According to former regulations, all members of all types of cooperatives retained ownership of the land they brought into the cooperative. The new regulations, issued the first of 1949, provide that land brought into the fourth type of cooperative is held cooperatively and in common. Profits are distributed

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among the cooperative fund and the members according to the work contributed by each. Plots for the personal use of cooperative members are not allowed in the lower types of cooperatives now; they are allowed only in the higher types. Regulations provide that only certain designated crops may be grown on these plots.

SRZ are not only cooperative organizations of a socialist type, but also cooperative organizations of the working people; 94 to 99 percent of the members of the SRZ are small and middle farmers. All nationalities in Yugoslavia are represented. For instance, Serbia has 120 mixed SRZ, 21 of which are Hungarian, 25 Albanian, 17 Rumanian, 9 Slovak, 3 Russian, and one Czech.

At the end of 1946, Yugoslavia had 695 artisans' cooperatives with 9,730 members; by the end of 1946, there were 2,014 cooperatives with 34,709 members. Artisans' cooperatives made 0.5 percent of all handicraft articles produced in Yugoslavia in 1946, 24 percent in 1948, and 29.6 percent by the end of 1949. The average hourly pay of a master artisan was 7 dinars in 1940, 18 dinars in 1948, and 23 dinars in 1949. The value of handicrafts made by cooperatives was 31,473,000 dinars in 1939, 1,103,465,000 dinars in 1948, and 1,376,579,000 in 1949.

Yugoslavia now has 346 srez councils, which include all municipal cooperatives in the territory of the srez in addition to all types of agricultural and farm work cooperatives. The srez councils work toward developing and improving agriculture, cooperatives, distribution, crop purchase, and preparation of agricultural products for export.

The state has helped cooperative organizations through agrarian reforms, distributing almost 800,000 hectares of the best land to the working people, through the agricultural machine service, commerce at tied prices, livestock and crop protection, agricultural education, the network of agricultural schools, crop purchase of agricultural products, and the tax system.

One of the most effective forms of help given by the state was the placing of large sums of money at the disposal of cooperative organizations. From 1947 to 1949, the state loaned to cooperatives 17 billion dinars in short-term credits and 5 billion dinars in long-term credits. The effects of this aid can be seen in capital building, and the building of an extensive network of cooperative centers, which are economic, cultural, and political centers in Yugoslav villages. Of the 4,305 cooperative centers which were under construction, 1,114 are finished except for the roof, 1,644 are roofed, and 531 have been finished.

Commerce in goods from the cooperative sector amounted to 13 billion dinars in 1946, over 24 billion dinars in 1947, and 30,500,000,000 dinars in 1948; 10 billion dinars of this last was commerce at tied prices.

The state has also united agriculture and industry by making uniform the purchasing power of village and city inhabitants.

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